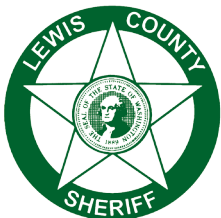


NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

A Citizen's Handbook

YOU CAN HELP US FIGHT CRIME!



Developed by:
Lewis County Sheriff's Office

Contact Numbers

Lewis County Support Volunteer Liaison – Neighborhood Watch
(360) 748-9286

Lewis County Support Volunteer – Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
(360) 748-9286

Lewis County Support Volunteer Coordinator
(360) 740-1450

Deputy/Sergeant Assigned to my Neighborhood Watch



Crime Stoppers of Lewis County
1-800-748-6422

Lewis County Dispatch – Non Emergency
(360) 740-1441

Lewis County Sheriff's Office – General Line
(360) 748-9286

Resources

Crime Stoppers of Lewis County
www.lewiscountycrimestoppers.org

Neighborhood Watch Program
usaonwatch.org

Washington State Crime Prevention Association
wscpaonline.org

Property Registration
leadsonline.com

Join us for Neighborhood Watch National Night Out on
the 1st Tuesday in August each year.

Dear Concerned Community Member:

This Neighborhood Watch Handbook will help guide you in how to protect, deter, and prevent crime in your community. You will learn about Neighborhood Watch, how it works, why it works, and how you can become actively involved in the program.

You will learn how to recognize suspicious activities, how to obtain a good description of a suspect and his/her vehicle, license plate numbers, and other important tips. In short, this handbook will teach you what you need to know to become involved in Neighborhood Watch and how to successfully partner with the Lewis County Sheriff's Office in helping to make Lewis County a safer place to live, work, play, and conduct business.

Caring about your neighbors and watching out for them is not a new concept, but in these busy times, the basics often get lost. I am excited and encouraged you are taking the time to educate yourself and become part of an important movement, in which citizens are taking responsibility and working with law enforcement throughout Lewis County to help stop crime.

The Sheriff's Office has resources to assist in furthering the success of each Neighborhood Watch group. We provide training and information on topics such as Emergency Preparedness, Firearm Safety, Use of Deadly Force, Protecting Your Children, Sex Offenders, and Crime Prevention.

I look forward to partnering with you and facilitating a successful Neighborhood Watch Program in your neighborhood. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if you need further assistance or information about the Neighborhood Watch Program.

Sincerely,

Steve Mansfield
(360) 740-1303

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What is Neighborhood Watch?

How does it work?

Neighborhood Watch is a citizen's involvement program where community members, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office, directly participate in the detection and prevention of crime. Names of similar programs that have existed in the past are Block Watch and Citizens Crime Watch. Regardless of the name, the basic concept involves citizens watching out for their neighborhoods and partnering with law enforcement to make Lewis County a safer place to live.

Citizens involved in Neighborhood Watch are trained how to recognize suspicious or criminal activities and report these activities to law enforcement. Neighborhood Watch members get to know their neighbors and work cooperatively in looking out for each other. The members engage in preparation and training that enable them to better respond to emergencies or disasters that may occur, providing aid and comfort in the event help from outside the neighborhood is delayed.

Neighborhood Watch IS NOT a group of vigilantes or lawless people taking the law into their own hands. Neighborhood Watch does not take the place of law enforcement in enforcing the law or apprehending criminals. Neighborhood Watch works!! Because law enforcement has limited manpower and cannot be in all places at all times, alert citizens within the community become extra eyes and ears for law enforcement.

Best of all? IT'S FREE to become a Neighborhood Watch participant! You may wish to acquire equipment such as binoculars, spotlights, flashlights, notebooks, Neighborhood Watch signs, or walkie talkies, but these items are optional and the cost can be split between all members.

Neighborhood Watch Participant Responsibilities

- Learn neighbors' names and be able to recognize them and their vehicles without hesitation.
- Keep personal block map, profile sheet, email addresses and contact numbers in an easily accessible place and update them on a routine basis to keep information current.
- Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings.
- Implement security measures suggested by law enforcement after a home security survey has been completed on your home.
- Properly identify all property (using guidelines suggested by Operation Identification at www.opid.org).
- Keep an eye on neighbors' homes and report suspicious activity.



Neighborhood Watch Participant Responsibilities (cont.)

- Write down the description of suspicious-looking persons or vehicles and report them to law enforcement.
- Do not risk personal safety to prevent a crime or try to make an arrest.
- Teach children crime prevention tips and how to respect law enforcement.
- Have mail or newspaper delivery stopped when you will be gone from your home for a length of time.
- Notify the Neighborhood Watch Captain and neighbors when you will be gone or on vacation so a watch can be maintained on your property.

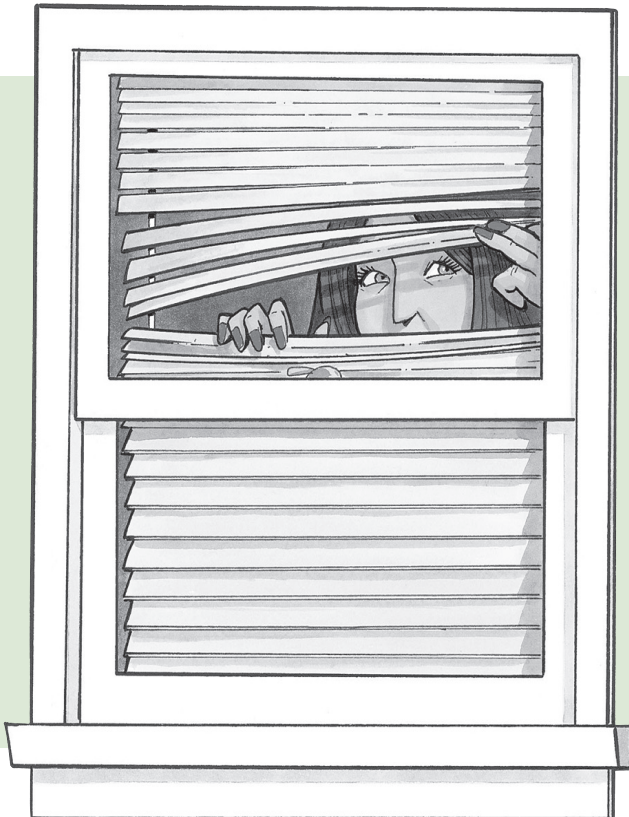
Note: A successful Neighborhood Watch group has a designated Neighborhood Watch Captain. This person is in charge of overseeing the program. Specific details about this important position can be obtained from the Sheriff's Office.



See Something? Say Something!

A lot of crime could be prevented or solved if citizens were alert and reported suspicious activity immediately. Crimes are often solved by good witnesses, but sometimes people are afraid to come forward. Even if you ultimately decide not to be an active member of a Neighborhood Watch program, we hope you will still follow the slogan, "See Something? Say Something." The program allows people to file online crime information via the Internet at <http://tips.lewiscountywa.gov/>.

This should only be utilized for crimes that are not in progress. 911 should be called if a crime is in progress or about to be committed.



"In an ever changing and challenging law enforcement environment we continue to seek new and innovative ways to encourage improved communication with the public we serve. The online tips format is another way for your Sheriff's Office to collect and disseminate certain types of information that may help us in achieving our mission. I encourage and support your participation and partnership. Together we can make a positive difference in efficiently and effectively addressing public safety issues."

- Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Suspicious Activity

A suspicious activity occurs when a person's conduct or action does NOT fit the norm of your neighborhood or the surrounding circumstances. It is when your attention is drawn to a person's conduct that is unusual, different, odd, dangerous, appears wrongful, or just not right under the circumstances.

If you observe such activity, you should call law enforcement **IMMEDIATELY**.

Some common examples of suspicious activity:

- **A person or a vehicle stays in the same location for a long or unusual period of time.**

- Many kinds of criminal activity could result from this suspicious activity - such as waiting to transact a drug deal, acting as a lookout for a criminal act being committed, a sexual deviant waiting to pick up a victim, criminal "casing" of a house as a potential target, etc.

- **A person who behaves strangely or whose movements are unusual.**

- This could be someone who is preparing for or committing a crime, or a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It could be someone who is hurt, sick, injured, mentally deranged, or ill.

- **An unfamiliar vehicle being frequently driven around your neighborhood or within a specific area.**

- The vehicle could be a getaway car for a criminal act being committed or in progress. It could also be someone waiting to commit a crime at an opportune or specific time.





Suspicious Activity (cont.)

- **People carrying, concealing, or attempting to conceal something suspicious.**

- The person could be transporting stolen property or concealing a weapon such as a knife or gun, or concealing contraband such as illegal drugs, etc.

- **A person looking into cars and/or moving from car to car.**

- This could be a person who is looking for property to steal inside the car or attempting to steal the car. It could also be someone hiding in the car with the intent to rob the driver.

- **A car departing or arriving from a location without its lights on during the night.**

- The car could be leaving the scene after the commission of a crime, such as a burglary, and the suspect doesn't want the license number and description of the car observed. The car could be in the process of being stolen, or the driver could be drunk having forgotten to turn the lights on.

- **A person dressed in suspicious-looking attire.**

- Wearing dark clothes, gloves, and a hat at night is often common attire for a burglar or someone wishing to escape detection.

Suspicious Sounds

Sounds can offer very important clues to suspicious, criminal, or dangerous activities within your neighborhood. Below are some common sounds that will likely get your attention and cause a heightened sense of awareness.

Screaming

Yelling for help

Alarms going off

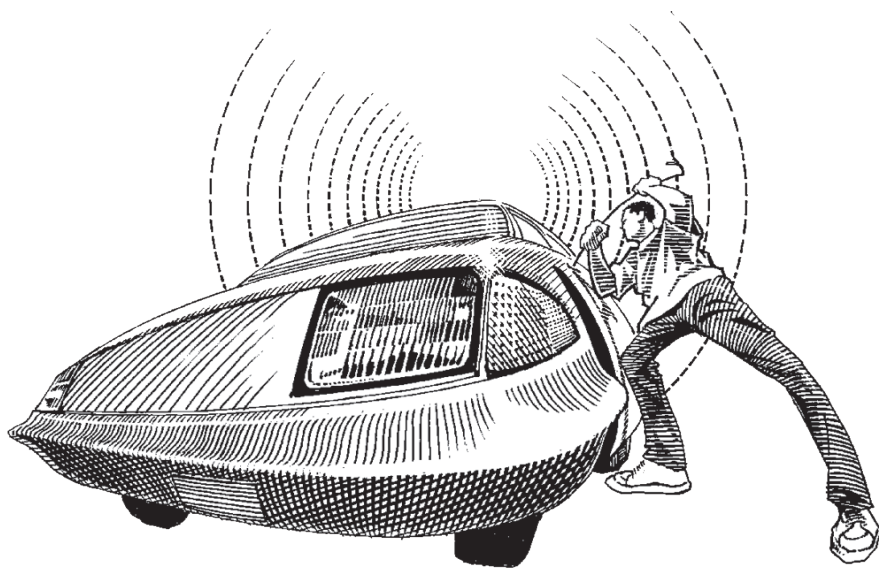
Breaking glass

Prying, pounding, or forcing sounds

Someone being hit or beaten

Gun shots

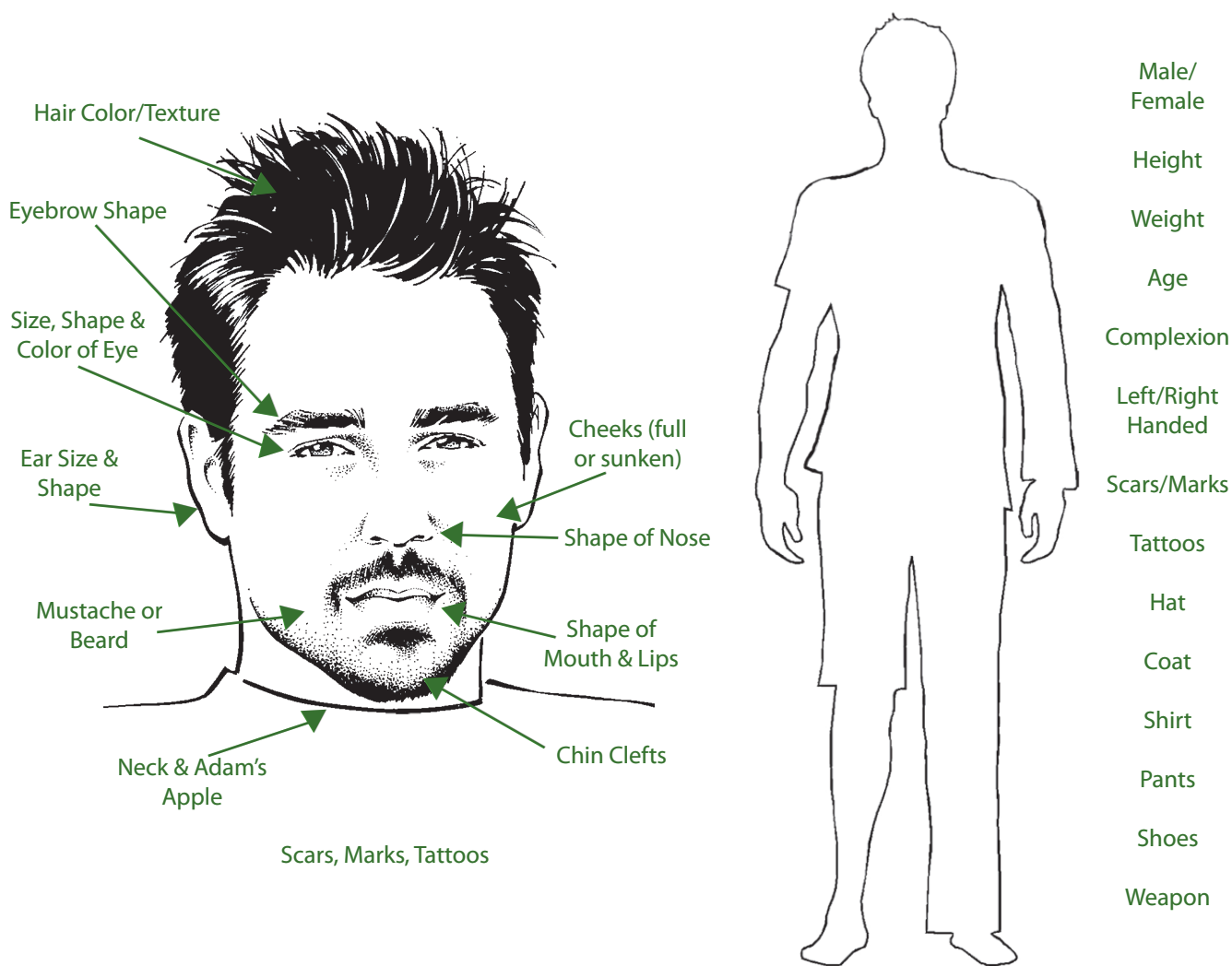
If you hear any of these sounds, you should call law enforcement immediately.



Describing Suspects to Law Enforcement

Believe it or not – there is a proper way to describe someone.

ALWAYS GO FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

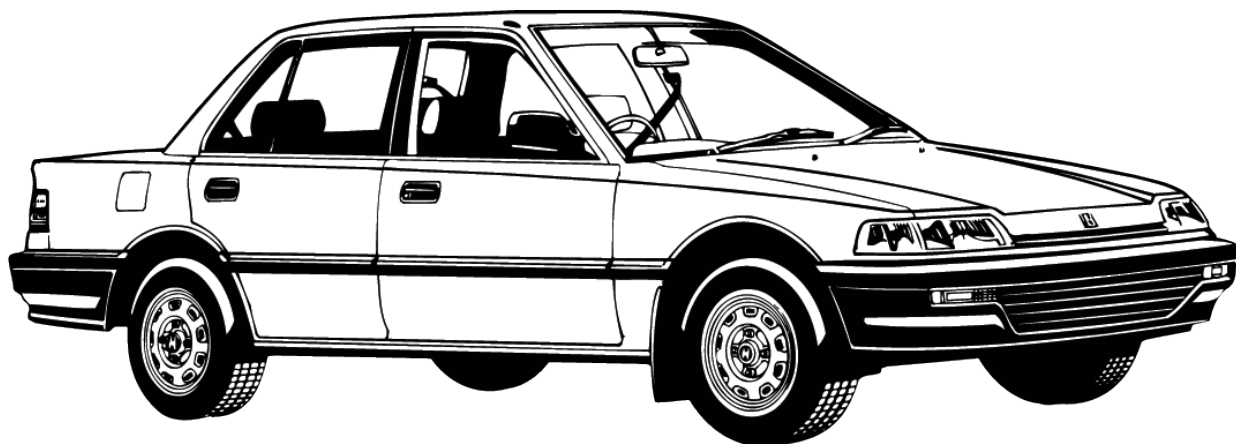


Vehicle Descriptions

When observing a suspicious activity that involves a vehicle, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you obtain the **BEST DESCRIPTION POSSIBLE** and the **LICENSE PLATE NUMBER** of the vehicle.

Law enforcement will ask you the following information:

- Make – Chevy, Ford, Toyota, etc.
- Model – Mustang, Accord, Cadillac, etc.
- Auto Type- Truck, SUV, Sports Car, Van, etc.
- License Plate – What state? Personalized?
- Two Door, Four Door – Sedan, Coupe, etc.
- Color – What shade?
- Other Identifying Features – Dents, broken/cracked windows, stickers, gun racks, etc.
- Year – Estimate, if you don't know is it newer or older?



Steps To Protect Yourself & Your Property

There are many steps you can take now to help secure and protect you, your home, and property.

- Lock your doors and windows EVERY TIME you are away from your home. Use the deadbolt for extra security. Ensure your doors are solidly constructed and fit in their frames snugly.
- Ensure strike plates are properly secured.
- Lock your vehicles EVERY TIME when not occupied.
- Lock your doors even when you are inside your home.
- Do not leave hidden keys in obvious places or near the door.
- Ensure your exterior lights are working and shine where needed.
- Install motion lights.
- Trim hedges and clear areas in which someone could hide near windows.
- Install a security system if finances allow. If you cannot afford an alarm, purchase an alarm sign or stickers to create the appearance you have one.
- Mount fake cameras outside your home in visible places to deter criminals.
- Do not leave expensive tools or machinery unsecured.
- Lock up bicycles, ATVs, and motorcycles when not in use.
- Engrave your name and identification numbers on property so if it is stolen, it can be traced to you.



Developed by:
Lewis County Sheriff's Office
In partnership with The Chronicle